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(12) **UK Patent Application** (19) **GB** (11) **2 222 539** (13) **A**

(43) Date of A publication 14.03.1990

(21) Application No 8922432.3

(22) Date of filing 27.01.1987

Date lodged 05.10.1989

(30) Priority data

(31) 8602272  
8610015

(32) 30.01.1986  
24.04.1986

(33) GB

(62) Derived from Application No 8701732.3 under Section 15(4) of the Patents Act 1977

(51) INT CL<sup>4</sup>

B23B 41/08, F16L 41/08

(52) UK CL (Edition J)

B3C C1A8B  
F2G G18B G7 G8

(56) Documents cited

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(58) Field of search

UK CL (Edition J) B3C C1A8B, F2G G7  
INT CL<sup>4</sup> B23B, F16L

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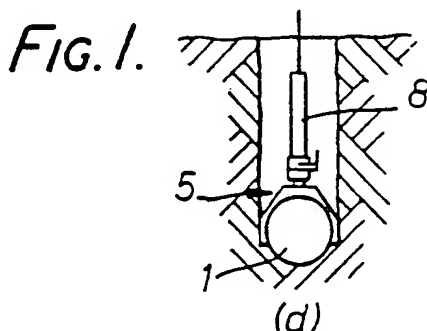
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(54) **Method of tapping subterranean pipes**

(57) Subterranean service pipes (1), eg. water mains, are tapped by minimal excavation to expose the upper half of the main and then locating (with respect to the main) a conventional pipe-tapping device (8) but without employing means encircling the pipe, thereby minimising excavation and reinstatement costs.

A clamp (5) can be used to carry out the method, the clamp comprising a pair of generally arcuate clamping arms each pivotally mounted on a tubular body. The arms are actuated hydraulically via links to embrace the pipe. Alternatively, a saddle member acting as a guide for the pipe tapping device may be adhered, welded or fixed via studs to the pipe.



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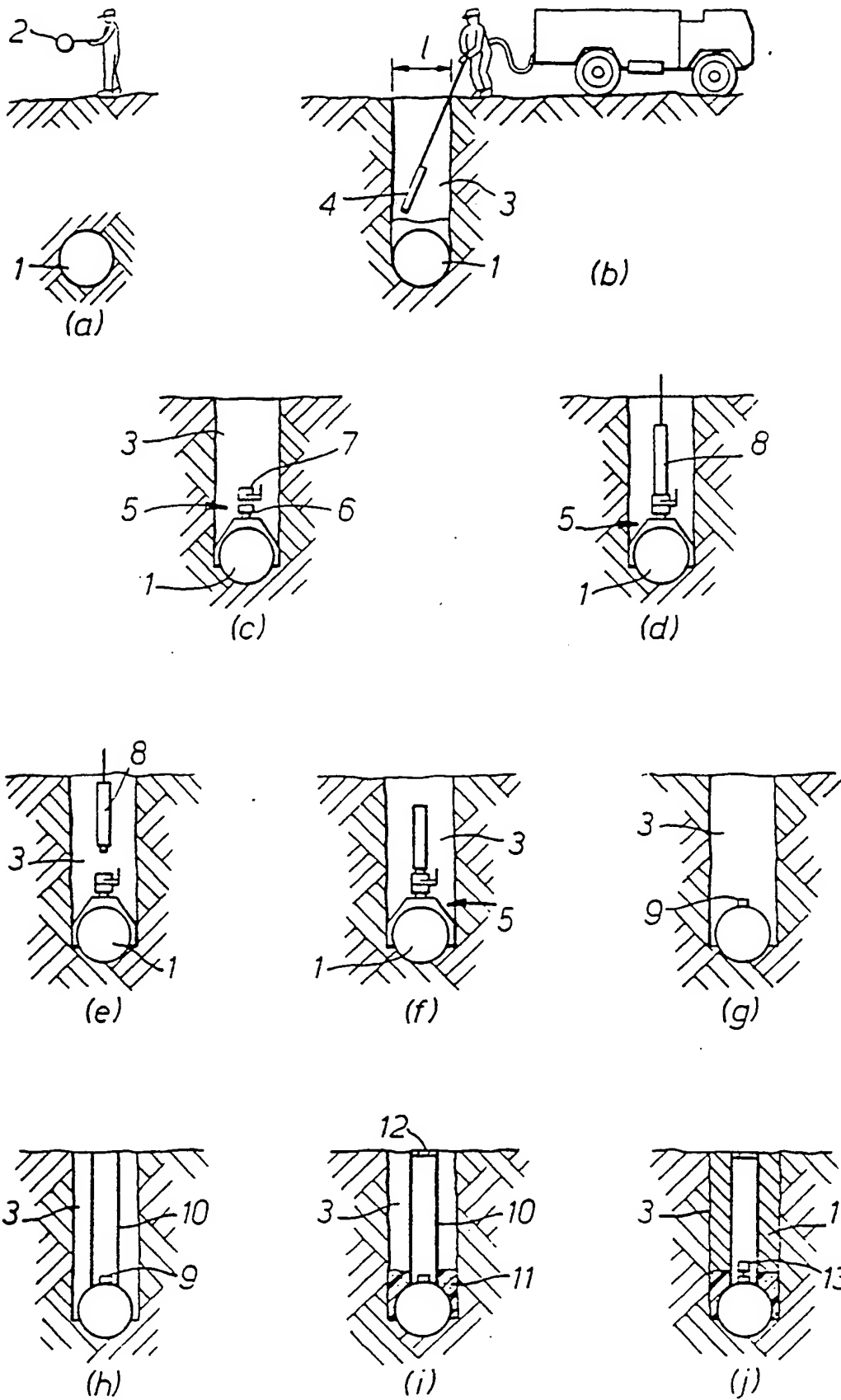


FIG. 1.

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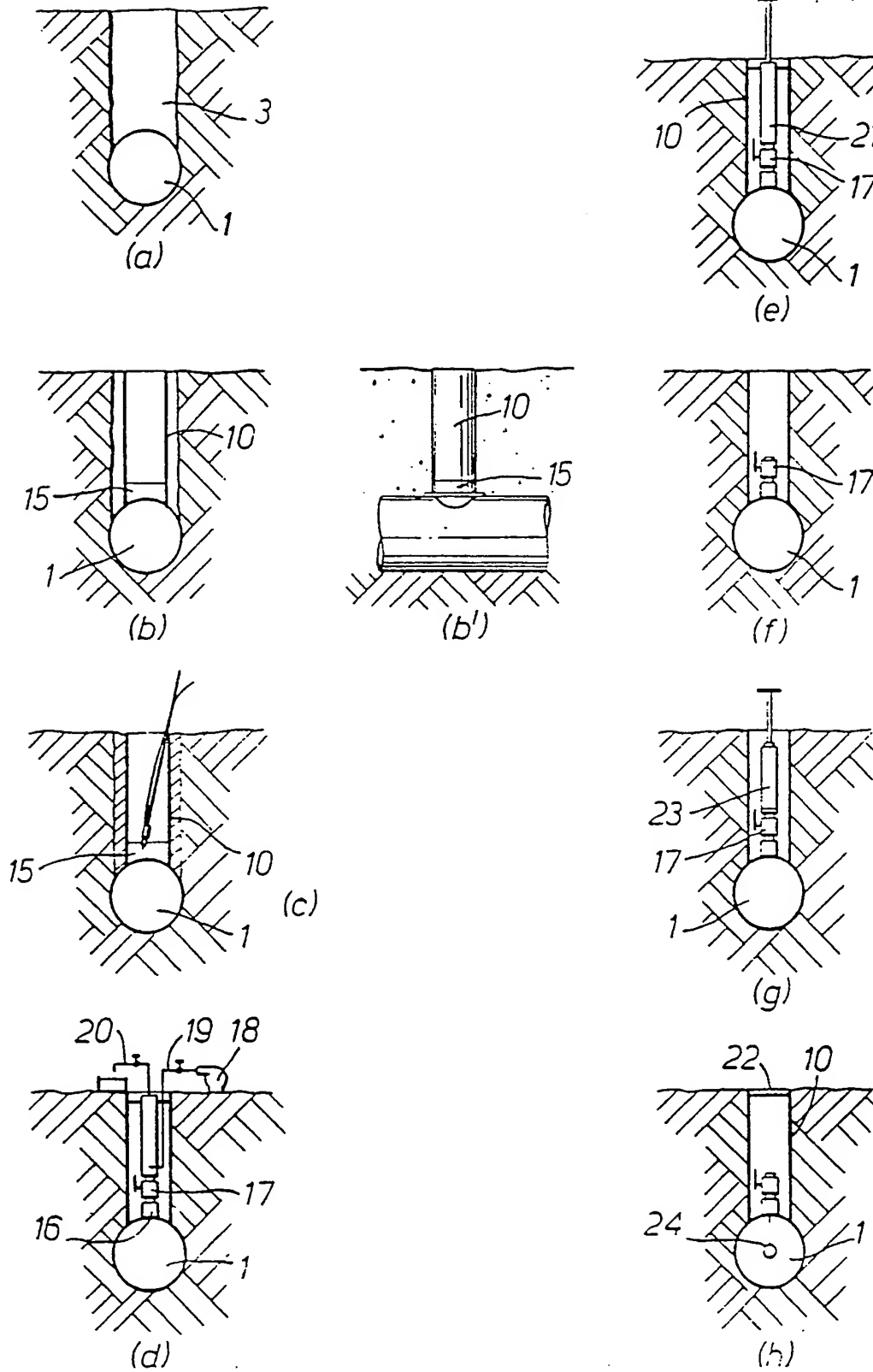


FIG. 2

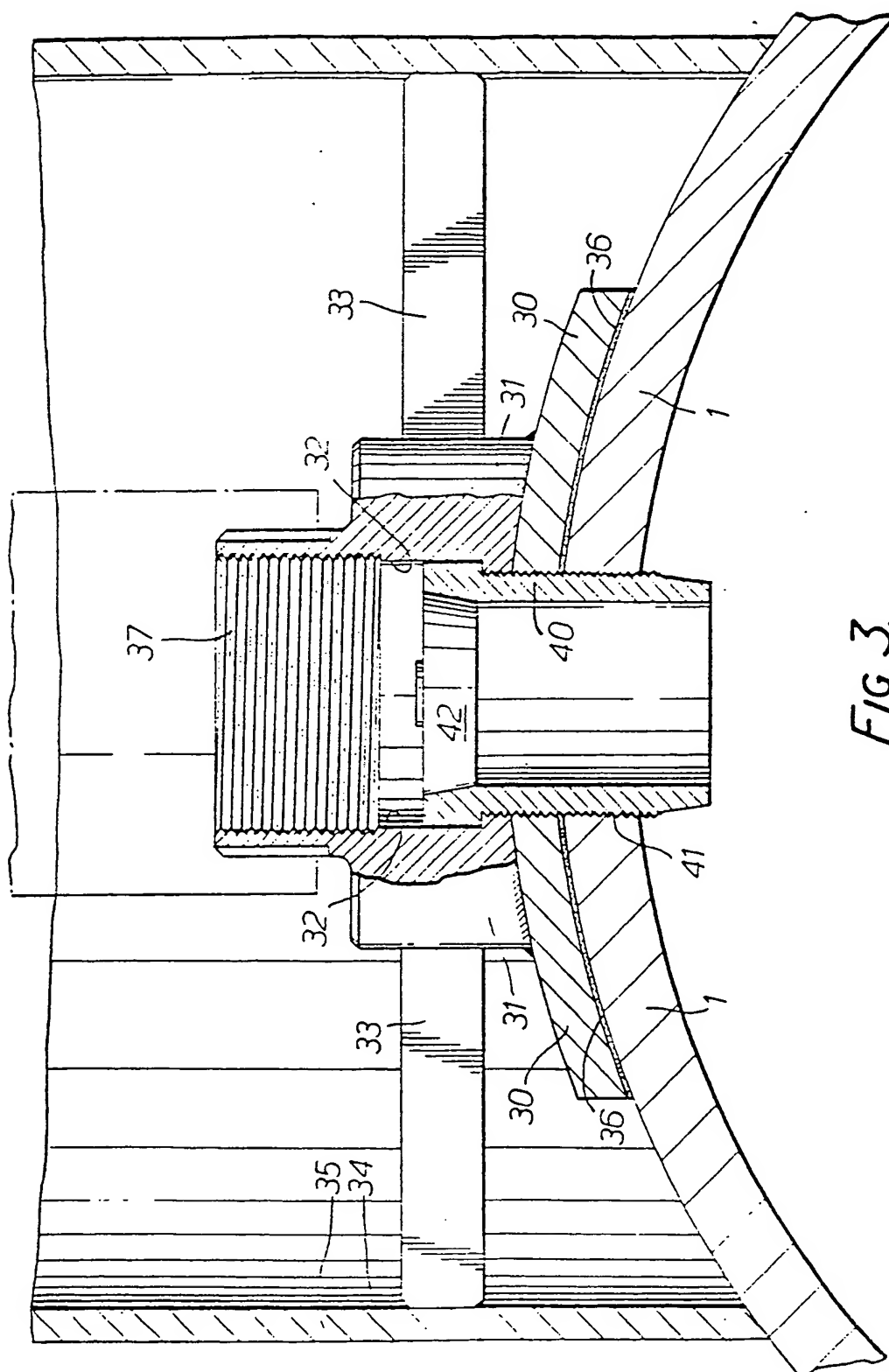


FIG. 3.

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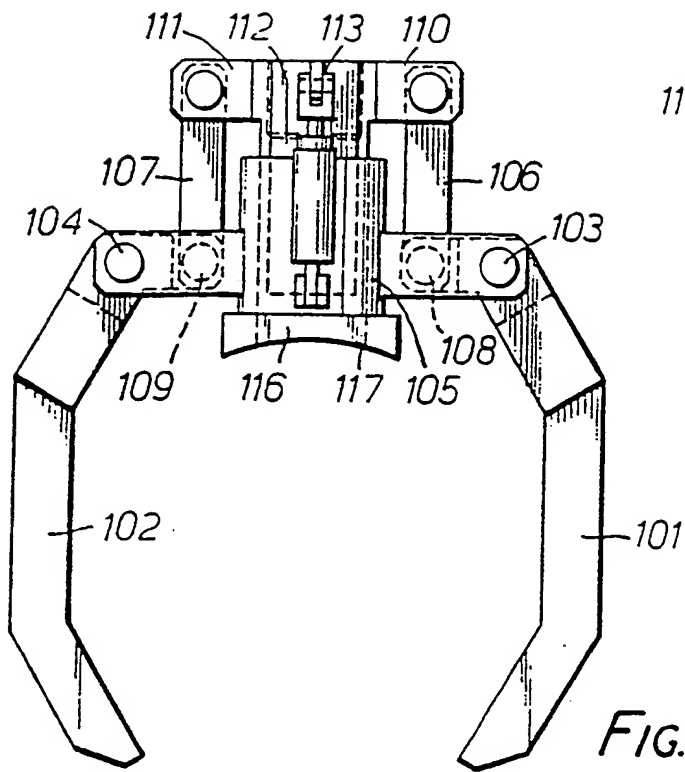


FIG. 4.

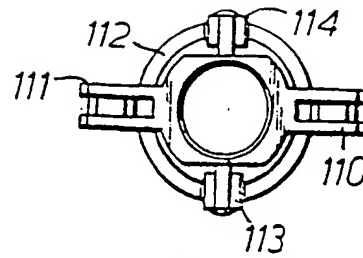


FIG. 5.

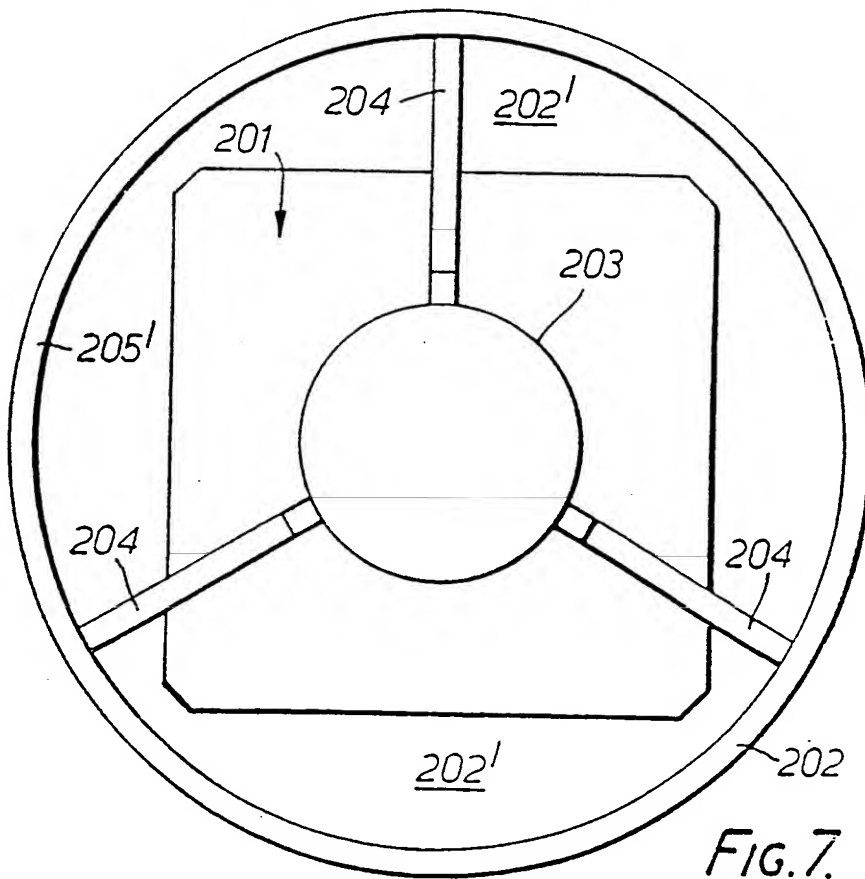


FIG. 7.

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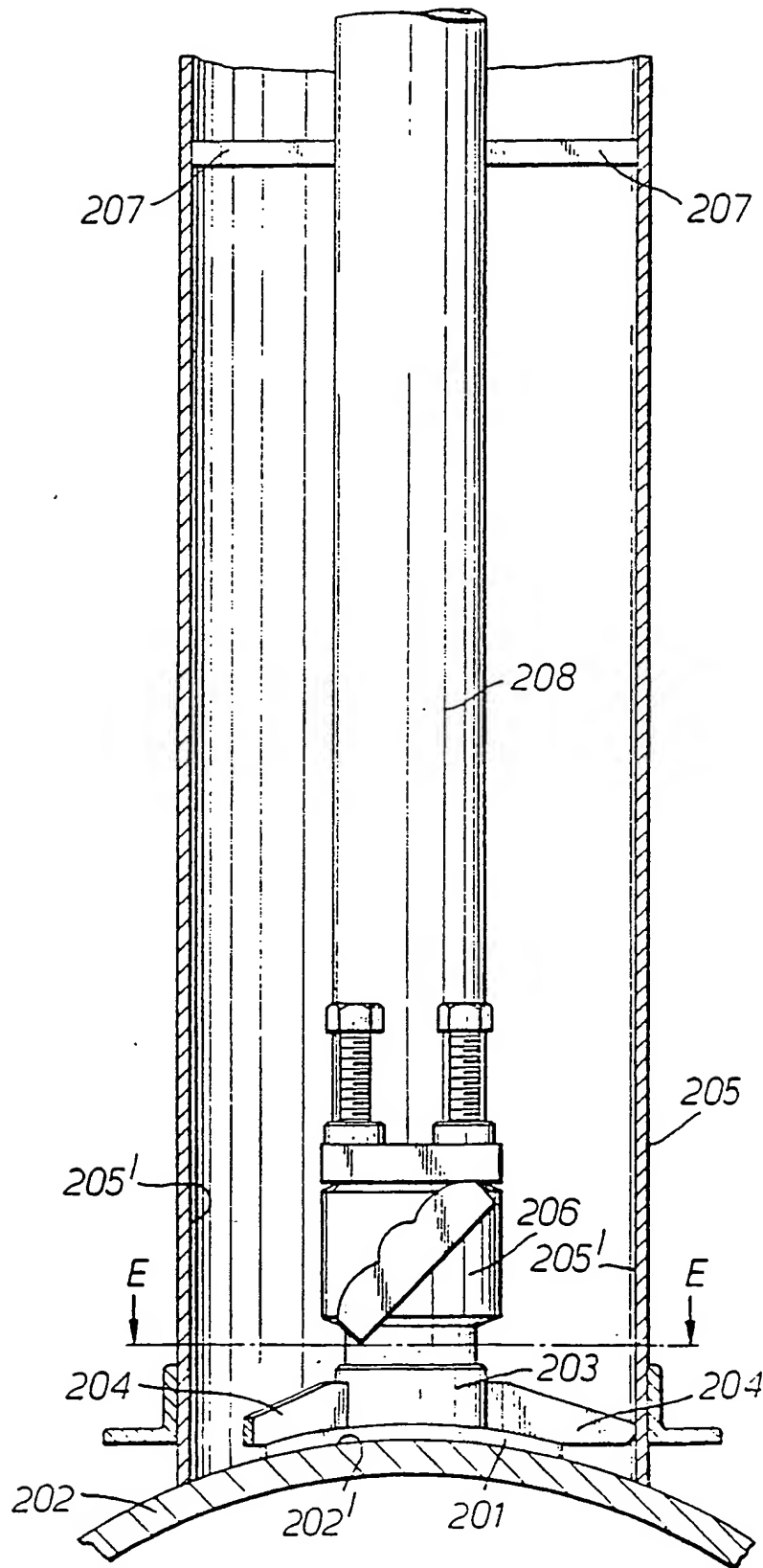
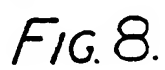


FIG. 6.





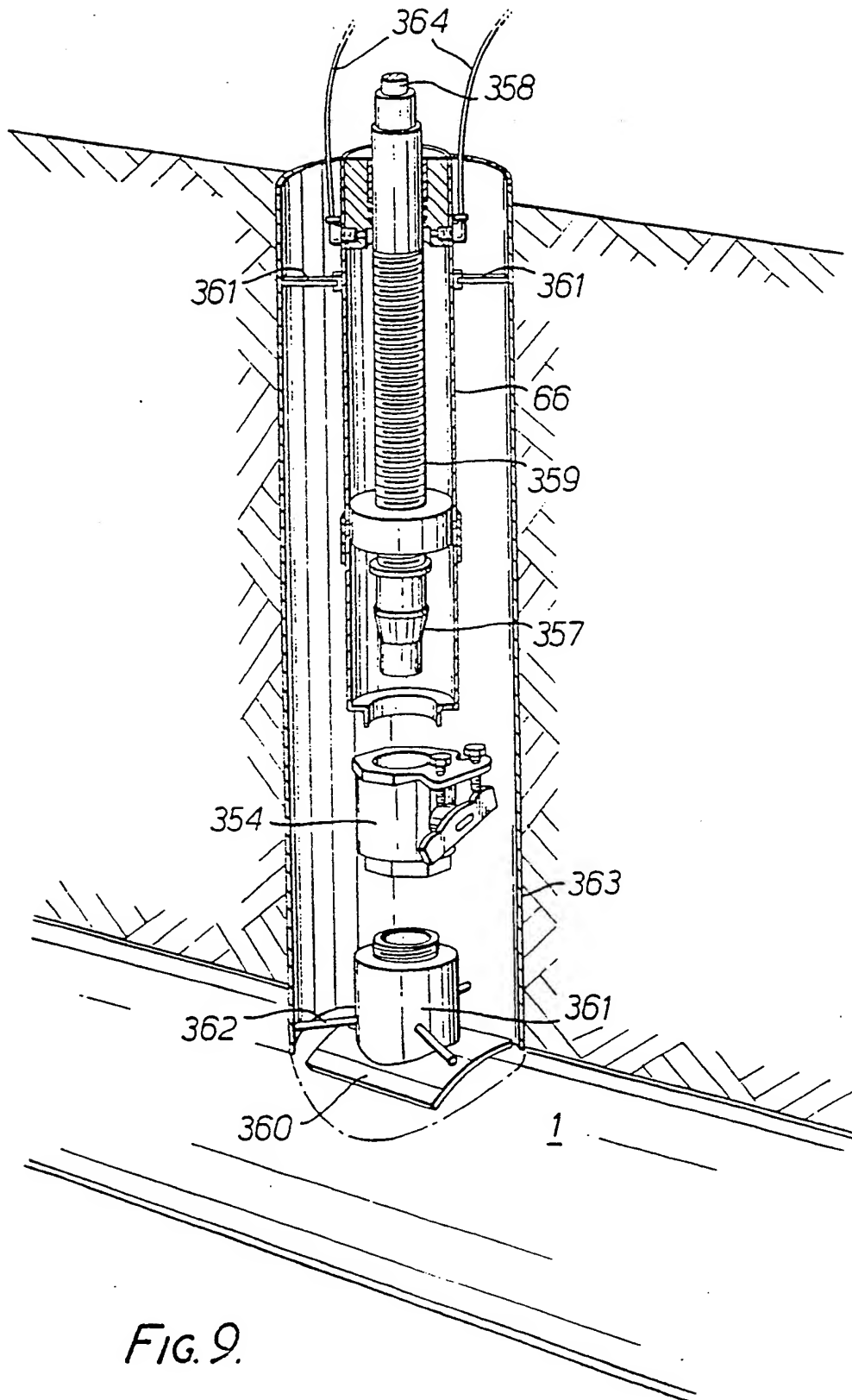


Fig. 9.

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METHOD OF TAPPING SUBTERRANEAN PIPES

This invention relates to under pressure tapping of pipes and particularly, but not exclusively, to tapping liquid-containing pipes such as water mains whilst the liquid is under pressure therein.

5           It is well known in the water industry to tap a water main whilst the main is operational, i.e. without turning off the water flow under pressure in the main. The known technique involves excavating to expose the main, and then cutting a hole in the main and tapping a screw  
10 thread therein. Tools have been developed whereby as the main is cut and tapped, water leakage can be avoided. One problem is to hold the tools in position against the mains pressure, and this is effected by excavating below the main and passing one or more chains or straps around  
15 the main, the tools being secured (directly or indirectly) to the chain(s) or strap(s) (see, for example, U.K. patent specification no. 1220973). It is possible in this way to hold the tools in position whilst they are exposed directly to the water pressure.

20           In this known technique, the excavation is conveniently large enough for man entry, e.g. 2m x 1.5m x depth to below the main. This size of excavation is relatively costly not just because of the volume of earth etc. to be moved, but also because of the substantial  
25 expense of reinstatement when tapping has been completed.

Attention has focussed in recent times on the

desirability of establishing the water flow patterns in pipe networks in order, for example, to be able to improve the networks and, consequently, the water supplies therefrom. In order to do this, it is necessary to insert flow-  
5 meters into existing subterranean water mains. Flowmeters are available which are especially designed for this purpose, but the cost of conventionally tapping a working main is so high as to limit severely the number of meters which can be installed. If the installation cost could be reduced, then  
10 of course more meters could be installed and better information obtained about the pipe networks.

It has been suggested that the installation cost could in principle be reduced if less excavation was required. We have investigated this matter and have now  
15 developed a method whereby a water main can be tapped (and thus a flowmeter or other device inserted therein, if desired) using a much smaller excavation than previously, thereby substantially reducing the total cost.

According to the present invention, we have  
20 found that, during tapping, it is possible to hold tools in position against mains pressure without encircling the main with a chain, strap or the like. As a result, it is not necessary to excavate below the main and, indeed, in accordance with a preferred feature of the invention, the  
25 depth of excavation need only be at most to just below the upper half of the main. Furthermore, the excavation does not need to be of man-entry area, but will normally be of a width (transversely of the main) not much more than the diameter of the water main, and of a breadth only  
30 sufficient to accommodate the liner (as described later). These features together enable a very substantial reduction in excavation cost (and thus in reinstatement cost) to be achieved while still enabling satisfactory tapping to be carried out. Whilst the present invention is  
35 intended to be of use primarily with water mains of

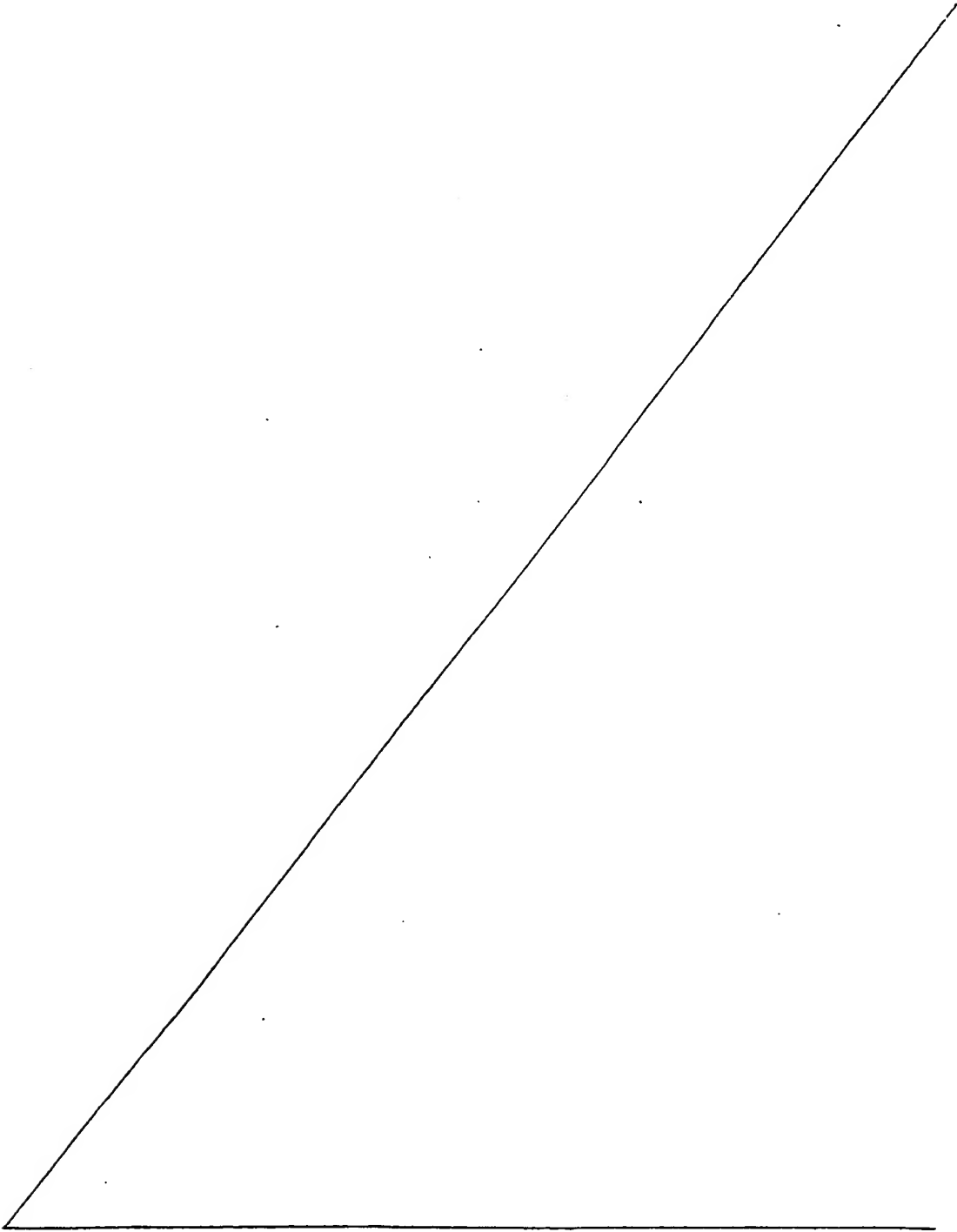
diameter from 12 to 54 inches (30 to 135 cm), in practice the vast majority of mains for which it will be applicable will be from about 12 to 15 inches (30 to 38 cm) diameter.

In accordance with a preferred feature of the  
56 present invention, we have found that an at least temporary  
"anchor" can be provided to hold the tool on the water  
main against the water pressure (without encircling the  
main), by using a particular type of clamp member. One  
preferred form of clamp comprises a body for positioning  
10 on the top of the main, the body having depending therefrom  
a pair of generally arcuate jaw members to clamp against  
opposite sides of the main on the lower half of the  
main. (Such a clamp is novel and constitutes another aspect  
of the present invention.) It is possible in this way for  
15 the clamp to grip the main sufficiently to hold a working  
tool, subjected to the outwardly directed force of the main  
water, against the main. Once the main has been tapped,  
the clamp can be removed for re-use.

~~In accordance with another preferred feature of~~  
20 ~~the invention, we have found that~~ an "anchor" for the  
tapping tools can be obtained by fixing a member, such  
as a saddle, on the main using adhesives for example. The  
saddle will most preferably comprise a curved sole plate  
to fit snugly on, and thus be securely adhered to, the  
25 main. (Such a saddle is novel and constitutes another  
aspect of the present invention.) We have found that,  
provided the surface of the main is well cleaned and other-  
wise in sound condition, satisfactory anchorage can be  
obtained using adhesives. We prefer to use for this  
30 purpose a saddle having a circular aperture therein, the  
tap being formed through the aperture. Whilst the use  
of a saddle member is preferred, it is not essential.  
One or more other member(s) can be used provided that they  
can subsequently provide an anchorage for the tapping  
35 tools.

- 3a -

In accordance with another preferred feature of the invention, an "anchor" can be provided on the main by welding one or more studs thereto, and utilising the



studs to locate a saddle or other member thereon. Stud welding devices are currently available for use in this way. All these methods can be used without having to excavate below the main.

5           The size (horizontal area) of excavation should of course be as small as possible consistent with enabling both the above operations, i.e. providing an "anchor" and the subsequent tapping, to be carried out. For this purpose, we prefer to use vacuum excavation which is itself  
10 a known technique which we have found to be very useful for providing small area excavations. It is not essential to the present invention for the excavation to be small and, indeed, the "anchor" techniques described, and the "alignment" techniques to be described, could be used with conventional  
15 excavation, but then of course the very substantial cost savings would not be obtained.

Where, as will normally be the case, cost saving is important, minimum excavation necessitates accurate mains detection. Sophisticated metal detectors are  
20 preferably used for this purpose, both to locate the position where excavation is to start, and also preferably to monitor the excavation as it progresses to ensure that it accurately finds the desired water main.

In accordance with another preferred feature of  
25 the present invention, we have found that when a small area excavation has been made to expose a water main, and sufficient of the main has been exposed to receive an "anchor" as previously described, it is highly advantageous to provide some means for proper alignment of the tapping  
30 tools. Thus, we have found that if the tapping is made other than strictly radially of the main and orthogonal (perpendicular) to its longitudinal axis, problems will usually arise. One such problem could be, for example, that it might be impossible to locate the flowmeter (inserted  
35 through the tapping) on the longitudinal axis of the main.

Mis-alignment will normally lead to false readings. Thus, accurate positioning of the tapping is very important and this is made difficult because of the (deliberately) restricted access to the main. Accordingly, a highly preferred feature of the present invention comprises the provision of means to enable accurate alignment (radially of the main and perpendicular to the longitudinal axis thereof) of the tapping (and, hence, of the tapping tools).

10           When a clamp is used as the "anchor" (as described above), we greatly prefer to provide on the underside of the body of the clamp, a plate to bear on the upper surface of the main and thus automatically (as the clamp is tightened) ensure exact alignment of the body  
15 of the clamp. The tapping tools are then located relative to the body to ensure the desired correct alignment thereof.

          Where, instead of using a clamp, a saddle is to be adhered to the main to provide the desired "anchor",  
20 we have devised another method of ensuring alignment. In this method, the main is exposed and then a vertical pipe (e.g. of 30 cm diameter) is accurately positioned to extend from the main to the ground level, the pipe extending radially outwardly of the main and normal to the  
25 longitudinal axis of the main. This pipe, once positioned, serves as the alignment guide for the subsequent adherence of the saddle, and various tapping operations.

          Where a welding technique is to be used, the studs must be welded accurately in position and, for example,  
30 either an automatic alignment device can be used (e.g. similar to the clamp), or a vertical pipe arrangement can be utilised.

          Once the alignment means has been placed and the "anchor" is in position, the tapping operation proper can  
35 begin. This operation is essentially conventional. A

valved tool is used to tap a hole in the main and a closure ferrule is screwed into the hole to close it. The tapping apparatus is then removed, and another tool is provided to remove a plug from the ferrule and insert a flowmeter  
5 therethrough into the main. Normally, the flowmeter is attached to a threaded plug for closure of the ferrule, and to various electrical and/or electronic components to process the output from the flowmeter. Such arrangements are known in the art and are commercially available.

10 In order that the invention may be more fully understood, reference is made to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 shows schematically the steps involved in one embodiment of method of the invention using a  
15 clamp;

FIGURE 2 shows schematically the steps involved in another embodiment of the method of the invention using a saddle adhesively mounted on a main;

FIGURE 3 is a sectional view of a ferrule  
20 located in a tapping in the main by the method shown in Figure 2;

FIGURE 4 is a side view of one form of clamp useful in the invention;

FIGURE 5 is a top plan view of the body portion  
25 of the clamp of Figure 4;

FIGURE 6 is a schematic view of the use of an adhesive saddle, with the hole cutting drill in position;

FIGURE 7 is a section on the line E-E of  
Figure 6.

30 Referring to Figure 1, an embodiment of the invention as illustrated as comprising ten steps, (a) to (j). The first step (a) comprises accurately locating the subterranean water main 1 using one or more metal detectors 2. Having located the position of the main 1,  
35 a slit trench 3 is excavated using a vacuum excavation



tool 4 (step (b)). The trench has a length "1" slightly greater than the diameter of the water main 1, and a width of less than the length. Having completed the excavation, a clamp 5 is lowered onto the main (step (c)).

5 The clamp (embodiments of which are described hereinafter) comprises a body 6 and valve 7 which (subsequently) receive the tapping tools. The clamp is such that the body and valve are automatically positioned to achieve appropriate alignment of the tools and, hence, of the tapping.

10 In the next step (d), a hole is cut and tapped in the main. The water pressure in the main is held by the clamp, in that the water pressure is exerted on the saw and tapping tool 8 which in turn is fixed to the clamp. After removal of the hole saw 8 (step (e)), the tapping is plugged

15 (step (f)) by screwing therein a ferrule 9 which itself includes a removable plug member (not shown). The clamp is now removed (step (g)) and can, of course, be re-used. There is now inserted (step (h)) into the excavation a liner

20 10 to extend from the main to ground level. The lower end of the liner encloses the ferrule 9 with the latter being on the axis of the liner, and the liner extends co-axially of the ferrule. The liner is now fixed in position (step (i)), for example by in-filling around it with polyurethane foam 11 or the like to locate it firmly in position. A

25 cover 12 is then provided to close the top of the liner 10. In this way, reinstatement costs are kept low. Finally (step (j)), a valve 13 is positioned onto the ferrule, the ferrule plug removed and a flowmeter inserted and positioned in the water main. The electrical/electronic

30 control box (not shown) associated with the flowmeter is positioned in the liner.

In the embodiment of Figure 2, instead of using a clamp to withstand the mains water pressure and to ensure alignment, a saddle is used which is secured to the main by

35 adhesive. Taking each of the steps in turn, the water main

1 is detected and a small excavation 3 made to a depth to expose the upper half of the water main (step (a)). The next step (step (b)) involves accurately positioning a liner to extend from the main to ground level, the liner  
5 being radial of the main 1 and perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the main (this is called "aligned"). This is achieved by providing a collar member 15 shaped to fit snugly on the main, with one end of the liner received within the collar. The collar is profiled so  
10 that, when it is seated on the main, the liner is automatically "aligned" (see side view (b')). Most conveniently, the liner is secured to the collar, and then the collar (on the end of the liner), is adhered to the main. In-filling is then completed around the outside of the liner. In  
15 this way, the liner is secured in alignment relative to the main. The side view in Figure 2(B') shows a liner normal to the longitudinal axis of the main.

In the next step, the area of the main lying within the collar and liner is cleaned (step (c)) to  
20 ensure good adhesion by a saddle 16 (step (d)). In step (d), a saddle fitting snugly in the liner is placed on, and secured by adhesive to, the main 1. The liner 10 ensures accurate positioning of the saddle. The saddle includes a control aperture through which the tapping is to be made  
25 into the main. A valve member 17 is fitted to the saddle. In order to ensure satisfactory securement of the saddle to the main, it is pressure tested in step (d) using pump 18 and flow and return lines 19,20, respectively. Step (e) involves drilling and tapping the main. The tool 21 is  
30 guided by the liner 10, and is thus held in alignment so that the tapping so made is in alignment. If the tapping was not properly aligned, it could be very difficult if not impossible subsequently to locate the flowmeter properly, and also it could be very difficult actually to introduce  
35 the flowmeter into the main by passing it (with its

associated plug and controls) down the relatively narrow liner 10. Accordingly, accurate alignment is important.

After removal of the drill tool 21 (step (f)), a ferrule is fitted into the tapping using tool 23 (step 5 (g) - see also Figure 3) and the flowmeter 24 is then introduced. Finally (step (h)), a cover 22 is placed over the top of the liner to close off the excavation.

Figure 3 is a somewhat schematic sectional detail of a saddle 30 adhered by adhesive 36 to a main 1. The 10 saddle 30 includes an upstanding annular flange 31 defining a through bore 32, through which the tapping is effected. Extending radially outwardly of the flange are three (two shown) guide arms 33 which touch the inner wall 34 of the liner 35 and centre the saddle in the liner to ensure 15 alignment. The upper inner wall of the flange 31 has a screw thread 37 to receive a valve and for connection to other items.

Figure 3 also shows a ferrule 40 screwed into the tapping 41 in the wall of the main. The ferrule is 20 tubular with a removable plug 42 to allow access to the main for placement of the flowmeter.

Figures 4 and 5 show one form of clamp useful in the method of the invention. It comprises a pair of clamp arms 101,102 which are each pivotally mounted to a tubular 25 body 105 at pivots 103,104 respectively. From their respective pivots, each arm extends inwardly and terminates at a pivot 108,109 respectively, where each is mounted to the lower end of a respective elongate link 106,107.

The links 106,107 extend vertically and are 30 mounted at their upper ends to opposed arms 110,111 on an annular yoke member 112. The yoke 112 has another pair of opposed arms 113,114 which are each attached to a hydraulic cylinder (only one cylinder, 115, is shown) mounted on body 105. On the underface of body 105 is a sole plate 35 116 having an arcuate lower face 117 profiled to fit snugly

on the outer surface of a water main. (Differently shaped sole plates are used for differently sized water mains. Likewise, arms 101, 102 are preferably made so as to be adjustable in length for use with differently sized mains).

5 Sole plate 116 has a circular aperture therein so that there is an open bore extending axially through the clamp from yoke 112 to plate 116. It is through this bore that the hole cutting and tapping tools operate.

In use, the clamp is placed on a water main with  
10 the lower ends of the arms 101, 102 extending to the opposed sides of the lower half of the main (but not to the bottom of the main). Sole plate 116 is seated on the main. The hydraulic cylinders are then actuated to raise yoke 112 relative to body 105. Opposed arms 110, 111 are thus  
15 raised (with yoke 112) and, via links 106, 107, cause arms 101 and 102 to tighten around, and grip, the main. At the same time, plate 116 is pressed firmly down to seat on the main. The clamp is thus secured about the main and the axis of the through bore of the clamp is "aligned",  
20 i.e. it extends radially of the main and is normal to the longitudinal axis thereof.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the use of an adhesively mounted saddle (the method of Figure 2). As drawn, there is shown the saddle sole plate 201 adhered  
25 to the outer surface 202' of mains pipe 202, the saddle including an upstanding flange or collar 203 having three radial spacer arms 204 which just touch the inside wall 205' of liner 205 and so position the saddle accurately within the previously aligned liner 205. The saddle is  
30 as shown in Figure 3. A valve 206 is mounted on collar 203 and a conventional drill machine 208 mounted over the valve, to cut a hole in water main 202. The drill has spacer arms 207 to centre it within the liner 205 to ensure accurate alignment of the tapping.

35 Figures 8 and 9 are part cut-away orthoganol

views illustrating the clamp method and the adhesive method of the invention, respectively. Referring to Figure 8, water main 301 has a clamp (generally as previously described with reference to Figures 4 and 5) attached thereto. Thus, the clamp has pivoted arms 301, 302 each connected to one end of a link 307 (only one visible) the other end of each respective link being attached to opposed arms 310, 311 of an annular yoke 312. The other pair of opposed yoke arms 313, 314 are each attached to a hydraulic cylinder 315 (only one visible) supplied with hydraulic fluid via supply lines 350, 351 and manifold 352 (only one visible). Operation of the clamp to grip the main 1 is as previously described. The clamp has sole plate 316. A PVC liner 353 is provided and the various tools are inserted therein to the main 1. Ball valve 354, drill tool 355 having drill housing 356, drill and tapping head 357, drill shaft 358 and feed screw 359 are shown by way of illustration. A "steady housing" 360 is also shown: this is attached to the clamp and together with location bars 361 helps to keep the tools properly aligned.

Figure 9 is very similar to Figure 8 and like numerals indicate like parts. However, in place of the clamp of Figure 8, a saddle 360 is adhered to main 1. The saddle has upstanding flange 361 with spacers 362 to accurately position the PVC liner 363. Also shown are water feed pipes 364 to tool housing 366 for pressure testing to check the effectiveness of the adhesive bonding of the saddle to the main, prior to drilling and tapping.

We have previously described herein a preferred feature of the invention whereby "an anchor" for the tapping tools can be obtained by fixing a member, such as a saddle, on the main. The member can for example be adhered to the main or located on studs welded on the main. In accordance with a further aspect of the invention, the

studs can be fixed to the main by brazing, eg. by the so-called "pin brazing" technique. It is also possible to braze a saddle directly to a main, if desired, although the use of brazed studs is preferred. The studs will  
5 normally have their axes parallel (rather than all radially of the main) so that they can conveniently be received in corresponding bores in the sole plate of the saddle, to locate and fix the latter relative to the main. As will be understood, when studs are used (either welded or brazed),  
10 adhesive is unnecessary if means are provided (as is preferred) to secure the saddle with respect to the studs. Compared with welding, brazing is generally to be preferred for use in small excavations.

It is known to connect a metal water pipe (eg.  
15 a main) electrically to a sacrificial anode and/or to other metal pipes. This can be achieved using studs brazed on to the metal pipe, the studs being joined to an electric wire connected, for example, to a sacrificial anode. The brazed studs used in accordance with a feature of the  
20 present invention can also be connected to an electric wire for electrical purposes if desired.

In the description given herein, we have referred to the use of saddles having a curved sole plate to fit snugly on the main. Such saddles can be in the  
25 form of castings. However, it is also possible to use saddles having a flexible sole plate which can be shaped on site to fit the particular pipe to which it is to be fitted. On-site shaping has obvious advantages. Such saddles can have, for example, a metal sole plate which is  
30 generally flat but which can be bent to conform to the pipe. The plate can be such that it is spring-like or resilient, in which case, after applying adhesive, it must be held in the desired configuration on the pipe until the adhesive has cured. Alternatively, the plate  
35 can be non-springy, in which case after bending into the

the required shape it can be adhered to the pipe in the same way as a casting. The adhesive itself fills the small gaps between the sole plate and the main.

We have particularly described various aspects  
5 of the invention with reference to tapping pipes. The invention also includes, however, in broader aspect the use of saddles for attachment (as described herein) to bodies other than pipes, eg. to other vessels such as boilers or vats etc. For this purpose, adhesives are  
10 preferred. The sole plates of the saddles can be rigid castings or of flexible metal sheet as described. The invention thus includes these saddles per se. and their use not only in tapping pipes but in connection with other vessels for tapping or any other use.

CLAIMS:

1. A method of tapping a subterranean pipe such as a water main, whilst the pipe contents remain under pressure therein, which comprises excavating to expose the pipe, locating pipe tapping apparatus thereon and  
5 tapping the pipe, characterised in that the pipe tapping apparatus is located with respect to the pipe without employing means encircling the pipe.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the  
10 depth of excavation is only to just below the upper half of the pipe.
3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the pipe tapping apparatus is located using a clamp member.  
15
4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the clamp comprises a body for positioning on the top of the pipe, the body having depending therefrom a pair of generally arcuate jaw members to clamp against opposite sides of  
20 the pipe on the lower half of the pipe.
5. A method according to claim 4, wherein said clamp includes means to enable accurate alignment radially of the pipe and orthogonal to the longitudinal axis  
25 of the pipe.
6. A method according to claim 5, wherein said alignment means comprise a plate to bear on the upper surface of the pipe and, as the jaw members of the clamp  
30 are tightened against the pipe, ensure exact alignment of the body of the clamp.



7. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the pipe tapping apparatus is located by first fixing a locating member on the pipe, and then locating the pipe tapping apparatus with respect to the said member.

5

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the locating member is fixed on the pipe using adhesive or by brazing.

9. A method according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the member is in the form of a saddle comprising a sole plate to fit snugly on the pipe.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the saddle has a circular aperture therein through which the pipe is tapped.

15

11. A method according to claim 9 or 10, wherein the sole plate is flexible to take up the shape of the pipe surface.

20

12. A method according to claim 1,2,7,8,9,10 or 11, wherein one or more studs are welded or brazed on to the pipe, and the pipe tapping apparatus or the locating member is located using said studs.

25

13. A method according to claim 7,8,9,10 or 11, wherein after said excavation to expose the pipe, a liner tube is accurately positioned to extend from the pipe to ground level, the liner tube extending radially outwardly of the pipe and normal to the longitudinal axis of the main, and said liner is used to ensure alignment of said locating member (eg. said saddle).

30

14. A method of tapping a subterranean pipe substantially as herein described with reference to Figure 1 or 2 or 8 or 9 of the accompanying drawings.

35

15. A clamp for engagement with a pipe for use in tapping the pipe, which clamp comprises a body for positioning on the pipe, means on the body for seating on the pipe to align the body generally radially of the pipe, a pair of generally arcuate jaw members extending on opposite sides of the pipe, and means for clamping said jaw members against said pipe.

16. A clamp according to claim 15, wherein said seating means comprises a plate to bear on the surface of the pipe and ensure said alignment as the jaw members are clamped.

17. A clamp according to claim 15 or 16, wherein the plate member is shaped to conform to the shape of the surface of the pipe which it engages.

18. A clamp according to claim 15, 16 or 17, which comprises an axial passageway therethrough which, upon positioning of the clamp on a pipe, is orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the pipe, and serves to provide access to the pipe surface for tapping tools.

19. A clamp for engagement with a pipe, substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 4 and 5, or Figure 8, of the accompanying drawings.

20. A saddle member for attachment on the exterior surface of a pipe, which comprises a sole plate for seating on the pipe surface, the plate having a circular aperture therein, and an annular wall member upstanding from the plate around the said aperture and defining with the aperture a through bore, wherein when the saddle member is secured with the sole plate seated on the pipe surface the bore axis is orthogonal to the longitudinal axis of the pipe.

21. A saddle member according to claim 20, wherein the wall member has two or more guide arms of substantially equal length extending radially outwardly therefrom for positioning a sleeve around the wall coaxial to the bore.

5

22. A saddle member according to claim 20 or 21, wherein the sole plate is shaped to fit snugly on the pipe surface.

10 23. A saddle member according to claim 20, 21 or 22, wherein the said wall member has a screw thread internally thereof.

24. A saddle member substantially as herein  
15 described with reference to Figure 3, or Figures 6 and 7, or Figure 9 of the accompanying drawings.